



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2004
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FOUR WISCONSIN ROAD CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES ARRESTED ON BID RIGGING AND WIRE FRAUD CHARGES

Road Construction Projects Worth More than \$100 Million to State of Wisconsin

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- Four Wisconsin road construction executives were arrested today on bid rigging and wire fraud charges for participating in a conspiracy involving projects let by the State of Wisconsin's Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and others, the Department of Justice announced. The road construction projects, which included public road, highway, bridge, street, and airport construction projects, were worth more than \$100 million to the State of Wisconsin.

According to the criminal complaints and affidavit filed yesterday in the U.S. District Court in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and unsealed today, James J. Maples, President of Vinton Construction Company of Manitowoc, Wisconsin; Michael J. Maples, Vice President of Vinton; Ernest J. Streu, President of Streu Construction Company of Two Rivers, Wisconsin; and John Streu, Secretary/Treasurer of Streu, rigged bids submitted to WisDOT and others from as early as 1997 until the present. James and Michael Maples reside in Manitowoc and Ernest and John Streu reside in Two Rivers.

"The Antitrust Division will vigorously pursue criminal bid-rigging conspiracies that harm American taxpayers," said R. Hewitt Pate, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division.

The investigation is being conducted jointly by the Department's Antitrust Division, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General.

"The criminal complaints allege an ongoing conspiracy to rig numerous state road construction contracts," said United States Attorney Steven Biskupic of the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

The Department alleges that in telephone calls and in-person meetings, James and Michael Maples and E.J. and John Streu, and others shared bid information, discussed potential competitors and agreed to rig bids in an attempt to allocate projects among themselves. The Department also alleges that the conspirators submitted rigged bids in electronic format through interstate wire communications from the Eastern District of Wisconsin to Florida. The majority of these projects were also federally funded. According to the complaint, as part of the alleged conspiracy and wire fraud scheme, the defendants had agreed to rig bids with respect to the following projects which were to be let today by WisDOT:

Project	Description
1	U.S. Highway 51 / I-39 – Columbia & Marquette Counties
14	U.S. Highway 151 – Fond du Lac County
25	State Highway 42 – City of Algoma / Kewaunee County
28	Custer Street – City of Manitowoc

"Detecting and preventing contract and grant fraud in highway and transit infrastructure projects is one of the top management challenges facing the U.S. Department of Transportation," said Kenneth M. Mead, the Department of Transportation's Inspector General.

The charges, if proven, would constitute violations of Section One of the Sherman Act, which carries a maximum penalty for individuals of three years in prison and a fine of \$350,000, and 18 U.S.C. § 1343, which carries a maximum penalty for individuals of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. The maximum fines may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

Anyone with information concerning price fixing or other anticompetitive conduct in the road construction industry should contact the Midwest Field Office of the Antitrust Division at 312-353-7530.

The public is cautioned that a criminal complaint is merely a formal method of filing charges against an individual and does not constitute an inference of his or her guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until such time, if ever, that the government establishes his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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